“Queer(y)ing” Historico-genealogies of Feminism for the University Classroom

We are all historians, whether we seek our explanations in political argument, in planning our life projects, in therapy or in narratives. Historical conventions function... as basic tools of thought. (Elizabeth Deeds Ermarth 2008)\(^1\)

I look at the suffragettes who fought and died so that we could have the vote and I'm awed... but for young women today, “feminism” means bra-burning lesbians who hate men... it isn't that women’s equality isn’t important, feminism just needs to be rebranded. (Geri Halliwell 2008)\(^2\)

In a recent television interview, Geri Halliwell yet again entered the discursive fray that surrounds the relationship between young women and the feminist project to confirm her ambivalent attitude to the specter of “feminism.”\(^3\) Halliwell’s comments in April of 2008 were not an isolated outburst; in recent years she has periodically affirmed her commitment to “justice [and] gender equality” whilst asserting that feminism has an “image problem” and needs to be “rebranded.” Moreover, much like the comments she has made in the past decade, Halliwell mobilized a much larger constituency for her

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3. In a recent television interview, Geri Halliwell yet again entered the discursive fray that surrounds the relationship between young women and the feminist project to confirm her ambivalent attitude to the specter of “feminism.” Halliwell’s comments in April of 2008 were not an isolated outburst; in recent years she has periodically affirmed her commitment to “justice [and] gender equality” whilst asserting that feminism has an “image problem” and needs to be “rebranded.” Moreover, much like the comments she has made in the past decade, Halliwell mobilized a much larger constituency for her
According to Halliwell, the practices of a narrowly imagined feminism – whilst important historically - do not meld with the concerns and experiences of young women today.

After the second-wave has apparently crashed and the contested domains of 1990s backlash politics and postfeminism emerged in its wake, Halliwell’s comments fit within a (now solidifying) mainstream representational tradition in western liberal democracies that oppositionally deploys the figurations “young women” and “feminism.” Indeed, as the spectacular embodiment of a Spice Girls led promotion of “girl-power” Halliwell was, of course, part of the complicated cultural landscape that surrounded feminism in the 1990s. Whether in Halliwell’s promotion of “girl-power” (in opposition to feminism), conservative commentary about the feminist project going “too far,” celebrations of a commodity-comfortable female sexuality as the chosen weapon of a “new generation,” or a spate of “female centered” visual and literary fictions that situated young women in ambivalent dialogue with the complex socio-cultural dividends of 1970s and 1980s feminist activism, “feminism” garnered new meanings as a virtuous, but outdated political project. According to this logic these “daughters of feminism,” are faced with the possibility of “having it all” but lament the various losses (of femininity, fun, beauty, motherhood and sexual enjoyment) that feminism produced. As B Ruby Rich presciently suggested in the late 1980s, “feminism has become a mother figure, and what we are seeing is a daughter’s revolt.” As many feminist scholars note (and/or animate in their own scholarship) the metaphor of generational change is a potent organizing motif in
It is little wonder, then, that academics in the gender studies classroom are all too frequently greeted with the phrase “I’m not a feminist, but...” As Yvonne Tasker and Diane Negra point out, ironic references to the “f-word”...
in popular culture are part of a much wider cultural reinscription of feminism as a dirty word for young women. And whilst a chorus of feminist voices publicly bemoan the caricatures of feminism that underpin these reactionary reinscriptions, reams of social science data confirm that young women view the feminist project in decidedly ambivalent terms: the reaction against feminism is working. Teaching a history of feminism (as a feminist project), then, poses some serious challenges. Not simply because we (academics) can’t rely on the possibility of raising the consciousness of our students to the enlightened views of feminism (as if the aim of history-making could ever be this unifying), but also because the students in our classrooms have been encouraged to understand themselves in a temporalised narrative of generational departure from feminism itself. Much feminist theorising in the 1970s and 1980s made powerful connections between the teaching of feminism’s history and an almost Freirien notion of consciousness-raising as a feminist project. Precisely because this was the “problem with no name,” the naming of women’s oppression by historians in the academy was politically a vital project. In contemporary western liberal democracies, however, feminism has now been named and violently renamed. In short, the cultural goalposts have moved. I would like to suggest, moreover, that the mutually encoding metaphors of generational and historical change (represented as mothers, daughters and their discrete socio-political contexts) have modulated this cultural shift. If, as Ashis Nandy argues, historical consciousness – namely, a mode of relating to the present and past according to narratives of progressive change – now “owns the globe,” it is little surprise that feminism’s past and present has been historicised. In one sense feminism necessarily possesses what we might term a cultural historiography: namely, a set of collectively constituted conventions and assumptions that function to authorize the truth about feminism’s history.
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kodiracketite metafori za generacijski i historiski promeni (pretstaveni kako majki, ķerki i nivnite diskretni socio-politichki konteksti) go modulirale ova kulturno izместuvanje. Ako e točno, kako što tvardi Ashis Nenzi (Ashis Nandy), deka historiskata svet – kako nacin za povrзуvane na seganoshca so minatoto sporед narativite na progresivnata promena – denes „ja poseduva zemjata“, вопшто не треба да се iznenadime што minatoto i seganoshca na feminizmot se historizirale. Vo edna smisla, feminizmot zadolkiteelno sdržki nešto što može da se narče kulturna historiografija: imeno, zbir od kolektivno konstituiran konvencii i pret-postavki što rabotat da ja autorizirat vistinata za historijata na feminizmot.19 Ovi historiografski konvencii zadolkiteelno cripat energija i se preispišivaat sekogash koga Halliwell zboruva za sufragjetkite, koga Bannister (Bannister) ke izjavi deka opšteweto продолжило понатаму и koga во дневните весници „герките“ на feminizmot se spomenuvaat kako koherenten sklop. Togash, можеби najgolemiot problem so koj se soočuvaat akademskite predavachi koj poduchuvaat historija na feminizmot e borbata protiv kulturnata historiografija што се vruzva со zborot na „Ф“.20

Во ваков контекст, академските истичарии се на го-лемо искушение да се нафатат во своите училници да ги „исправаат“ историските и современите заглуви за feminizmot. Неспорно е дека народските narativi што овозможуваат круто отфрлање на feministikata politika imaat presudna potkrepa во „mejnstriim“ pretstavite za minatoto i za seganoshca na feminizmot, kojto ja brišat seta kompleksnost i go pretstavuvaat современot feminizam vo ruba што многумина edva bi ja prepoznale. Како што со задоволство би указал секој учен feminist, од деведесеттите години до денес historiographic conventions are necessarily energized and reinscribed every time Halliwell talks about the suffragettes, Bannister declares society has moved on and the “daughters” of feminism are invoked as a coherent constituency in our daily newspapers. Perhaps the biggest problem facing academics teaching the history of feminism, then, is the battle against the cultural historiography currently attached to the f-word.

The temptation for academic historians in this context to “correct” the historical and contemporary misconceptions about feminism in the classroom is powerful. Without question, the popular narratives that enable a firm rejection of feminist politics are crucially supported by “mainstream” representations of the feminist past and present that efface any complexity and renders contemporary feminism visible in a costume many would barely recognize.21 As any feminist scholar would happily point out, a wealth of writing by young feminists has emerged since the 1990s that grapples with the inheritances of the feminist project and manages
se pojavilo celo edno mnoštvo pisanija od mлади feminističkih mladih i koji su učenici, koji se zanimaju za feminističke ideje i koje uspeva da ponuda modaliteti na misla i praksa čija je premisa nega otvaranje. Treći brij se pojavio, te se nego, navedene generacijske konkretnog orientiranja kon popularnog i političkog kulturnog, političkih ideja za identitet i postmodernog štetstvenog preraspojedevanja - moguće da je najistaknut među niv. To je trudovit od trećih bran (i, navedene, od postfeminizma) toga da go ponudat toju vid živo raznoviđen korak za vo učenici.22 Međutoa, dodeka konflikte i razlike među sebeidentifikovanite (ili, navedene, igorantski prepoznavane) napisni na treći brij i postfeminizma pokazuva kon raznoviđnost na feminističkata misla, sepak edna generacija metafora elementarija golum del od ovaana analitika i politička praksa. Kakto što naglasuva Astrid Henri (Astrid Henry), “generacijite staale [staale] izvetven koncept so koj se obelежува некакva разлиka među feminizmit i feministite [vo ramkite na feminističkiot diskurs].”23 Феминист(к)ите од treći brij i nivnite razcharenii majki od vtorot brij, na primer, često se povikuvaat kon generacijska promena kako politički i teoriski lek za sibe problemi na antifeminizmit i feministite [vo ramkite na feminističkiot diskurs].24 No, kakto što ukajuana Lisa Hagedon (Lisa Hogeland), „generacijskot razmišluvanje sekogash neverojatno obopštuva“25: ne pomalku zatoa što go legimiira vprejnuvaneto na konkretnite politički i socijalni praktiki vo dazeni vremena i na zadeni mesta. Tokmako kakto što kulturnata historiografija go (premestila) smestila feminizmot vo minatoto, takak i generacijskot razmišluvanje (premestuvva) smestuva odredeni tipovi feministička praksa vo minatoto. Otuka, vgraduvaleto na feministički napisni od naUREDnata generacija vo našite dodiplomski pred-

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to offer modalities of thought and practice that aren’t premised on rejection. The emergence of the third-wave – with its generationally specific orientations towards popular culture, identity politics and postmodern strategic redeployment – is perhaps, the most prominent amongst these. Third-wave (and, indeed, postfeminist) writings could thus offer precisely this kind of vigorously diverse corrective for the classroom.22 However, whilst the conflicts and differences between self-identified (or, indeed, dismissively recognized) third-wave and postfeminist writings gesture towards the diversity of feminist thought, a generational metaphor nonetheless foundationalises much of this analytic and political practice. As Astrid Henry points out, “generations [have become] a commonplace concept to mark difference among feminisms and feminists [within femininst discourse].”23 Third-wave feminists and their disenchan-ted second wave mothers, for example, frequently invoke generational change as the political and theoretical panacea to the problems of the anti-feminist present.24 As Lisa Hogeland points out, however, “generational thinking is always unspeakably generalizing”25: not least because it legitimates the deployment of particular political and social practices in certain times and places. Just as a cultural historiography has (dis)placed feminism in(to) the past, so too, generational thinking (dis)places certain types of feminist practice in(to) the past. Deploying the next generation of feminist writings in our undergraduate courses in order to disrupt this cultural historiography of a one-dimensional and irrelevant feminism then, might be problematic precisely because they tend to animate the historico-generational logics that make this “mainstream” dismissal possible. The temporalizing logics of a cultural historiography that locates feminism in a history that liberal democracies have “progressed passed” are shared by feminist writers who situate youthful feminist practices as the latest
For these reasons, it strikes me as important to think about the political work the notion of generational change is performing across anti, ambivalent, and pro-feminist positions alike. Joan Scott argues that the "the production of knowledge about the past, while crucial, [should] not been an end in itself, but [should] provide the substantive terms for a critical operation that uses the past to disrupt the certainties of the present and so opens the way to imagining a different future."\(^{26}\) Following Scott, rather than simply correcting misconceptions about the feminist past and present in our classrooms, perhaps we should instead be reconfiguring our historical narratives to disrupt the coherence of this frequently-invoked historico-generational narrative. This is not to say that generational distinctions and debates are without meaning and importance. As Diane Elam points out, their very potency suggests otherwise.\(^{27}\)

Whilst the idea of a neat generational divide is impossible to uphold, the oppositional nature of its framing and its structuring presence in feminist discourses suggest that an important set of questions about feminist political
action are being addressed. Perhaps the generational distinction is energized because it allowed interlocutors to differentiate modalities of feminist thought, practice and identity in the present. However, the deployment of these distinctions within narratives of historical change and progress necessarily closes down the imaginative horizons of feminism’s present and future.

With this in mind I’d like to que(e)ry feminism’s history for the university classroom of our postmodern (and perhaps postfeminist) present. In the discussion that follows I examine the historico-generational logics that underpin a variety of “responses” to feminism in order to suggest that a shared cultural historiography underpins their apparent disagreement. This discussion, necessarily, collapses the difference between modalities of thought normally understood to be in conflict, if not outright opposition. Postfeminists, third-wave feminists, anti-feminists and Geri Halliwell possess myriad points of crucially important political and theoretical differentiation. However, I am suggesting that the generational metaphor sluices across these fields to enable points of unspoken (and problematic) historiographic commonality as well. Thinking about these points of commonality, then, might offer a way to reconfigure analytic metaphors and historical framings for the classroom. What would happen if the temporalized distinctions made between the second and third-waves, between feminist mothers and their ambivalent daughters, and between the (modern) feminist and her post(modern)feminist inheritors were strategically redeployed onto a more expansive genealogy of feminist thinking and practice? Might this provide a “critically effective” history of feminist practice for the university classroom in western liberal democracies and
Queer(y)ing feminism’s history?

Since the early 1990s, a chorus of professional historians has decried the bogey-man of postmodernism as the cause of a turn away from the “big questions” (with all the gendered connotations the notion of historiographic substance entails).\(^{29}\) According to this criticism, a “postmodern” commitment to provisionality and “situated knowledge” production,\(^{30}\) an admission that empirically verifiable historical knowledge is a “modernist fiction,”\(^{31}\) and the confession that professionally admissible knowledge about the past is authorized by historiographic consensus rather than the past itself\(^{32}\) somehow makes asking these
A postmodern approach to historical knowledge demands an admission that the answers we offer are always readings of the traces of the past, and thus, like any reading, subject to contestation, change and uncertainty. A classroom history of feminism that acknowledges our postmodern age should be, then, a provisional and situated one. In a similar way, Alun Munslow argues that our ethical, political and moral obligations as historians in an age of postmodernity are to the present because a claim to an exhaustive truth about (and thus ethical obligation to) the past is contextually incongruous. If feminism is an emancipatory political practice premised on the pursuit of social, political and cultural change, feminism’s history (which seems a pretty “big question”
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politička praksa чии премиси се врз потрагата по социјални, политички и културни промени, истори- 
jата на феминизмот (која мене ми изгледа како доста „големо прашање“) треба одново да се напише за да ги подрите политичките реконфигурации кои и ната- 
му ги блокираат тие изменји во нашево време.

Понатаму, дури и ако застранувањето од „големите прашања“ е факт што може да се квантификува и чиј исход може да се објави (а не сум убедена дека е така), оваа критика не може да се насочи кон настав- 
nата пракса на повеќето академски историри кои ги познавам. Навистина, подемот на додипломските општи курсеви во одредена смисла ги поттикнал историричарите секоја недела од своите катедри да ги претставуваат опширните историшки промени. Ричард Прајс (Richard Price) вели дека историската пракса треба истовремено да биде и „наврање на минатото, размислување за него и документирање на процесите со кои се создава историја;“ тогаш, дели оваа поштапка може да биде и разгледување- 
tо на обликовот на нашите наративи од училниците. Понатаму, како што истакнува Хелен Буен Раддекер (Helene Bowen Raddeker), „иако многуима историричарови навистина ја прифаќаат опшеваноста на некои ‘постмодернистички’ критики... допрва треба тоа да го направат и во својата наставна прак- 
sа.“ Тогаш, чекор во вистинската насока можеби е 
да се размислува за нашите „големи приказни“. Раз- 
mислувањето за политичките импликации на „го- 
лемите“ приказни што решаваме да ги раскажеме во училниците – клучно место каде што приказните и 
натаму се одиграваат и покрај разноразните пред- 
видувања дека таа дисциплина ќе изумре – е витал-
на аналитичка поштапка, зашто овие наративи неми-
новно се вклучени во одржувањето на конкретните 
идентитети во нашата сегашност. Како што толку 
неодоливо интересно покажува работата на Марга-
Moreover, even if the turn away form the “big questions” was a quantifiable fact of publishing output (which I’m unconvinced it is), this criticism can’t be leveled at the classroom practices of most academic historians I know. Indeed, the rise of the undergraduate survey course has, in one sense, encouraged historians to enact the broad sweep of historical change from their lecture podiums each week; we need to carefully consider the political implications of the narratives we are forging in these classrooms. Richard Price suggests that historical practice should at once be “a recovery of the past, rumination on it, and a documentation of the process by which history is made;” considering the shape of our classroom narratives, then, might be part of this procedure. Moreover, as Helene Bowen Raddeker points out, “whilst many historians do accept the justice of some ‘postmodernist’ criticisms... they are yet to follow through in their teaching practices.” Contemplating the shape of our “big stories,” then, might be a step in the right direction. Thinking about the political implications of the “big” stories we choose to tell in the classroom –a key site where histories continue to be enacted in spite of various predictions of disciplinary demise – is a vital analytic procedure because these narratives are necessarily implicated in the maintenance of particular identities in our present. As the work of Margaret Somers so compellingly demonstrates, identities are, in part, made coherent via their narrativized relationship to the past. Thinking about possible congruencies between our classroom narratives and a cultural historiography that foundationalises anti-feminist identities is a crucial project for our anti-feminist present.
It might seem strange to place a strategic reconfiguration of feminism’s history for the classroom in nominal dialogue with queer theory rather than feminist pedagogy. Indeed, whilst there is a rich corpus of feminist theorizing upon which to base this particular pedagogic exercise, the theoretical constellations of queer theory (perhaps too) neatly provide the suitably disruptive intellectual tools to unhinge dominant formations of feminism’s cultural historiography. This is not to say, however, that this project is premised on a rejection of the appellation “feminist” (unsurprisingly, given that this rejection is precisely the strategy this article is attempting to unhinge). Rather, queer’s stabilizing post-structuralist assumptions about the fundamental instability of identity-categories and knowledge-formation provides a useful analytic strategy in this case. In contrast, the term “feminist theory” does not imply the same constellation of politico-theoretical tools, and, moreover, this disunity is worth maintaining. Whilst queer theory has a “postmodern” approach to identity, feminist theory and practice might (and sometimes, does not). Moreover, like queer thinking, a strategic reconfiguration of feminism’s history is a necessarily postmodern project; in this case, because it undermines the modernist fictions of historical knowledge and enacts history according to the politics of our present.
It is, however, important to heed Sedgwick’s reminder that “the study of sexuality [from which queer theory has emerged] is not coextensive with the study of gender; correspondingly, antihomophobic enquiry is not coextensive with feminist enquiry.” Put simply, queer thinking doesn’t automatically ensure feminist outcomes.

However, isolating these paradigms is even less productive and forcing queer thinking to account for feminism’s history can only be a useful enterprise. As Annamarie Jagose argues, because queer is premised on the rejection of coherent identity categories “it calls into question… apparently unproblematic terms. It [thus] has the potential to be annexed profitably to any number of discussions.” For Pamela Robertson, this means that “queer” isn’t limited to a study of sexuality, rather, it “functions… as an explanatory term connoting a discourse or position at odds with the dominant symbolic order.”

Thinking queerly about feminism’s history, then, is a political and theoretical strategy foundationalised by an attempt to disrupt a cultural order that maintains heteronormative codings of gender difference. This is precisely the project of feminist practice, but conducted with a set of specifically queer assumptions about the formation of identity.

Indeed, whilst feminist pedagogy has engaged in useful elaborations of classroom practice, that isn’t
praksa, tuka ne se занимаваме со тоа.43 Во овој оглед
ме интересира создавањето на феминистичкото ис-
ториско знаење и, поопширно, пошироките устрој-
ства на историското знаење за феминизмот. Поимот
феминистички генерации, ми се чини, има степен на
историзираща културна и академска потпора која
налага значителна вознемиреност. Според Сузан де
Кастел (Suzanne de Castell), квир педагогијата бара
наставна програма што се „спроведува намерно за да
пречи во создавањето на... нормални предмети“.44 Во
извесна смисла, токму тоа е задачата на ова шпеку-
лативно пренаосочување. Една квир испитувачка
историја на феминизмот треба да го попречува соз-
давањето на „младата жена“ како субјект кој е гене-
рациски одвоен од феминизмот.

(Современиот) феминизам: корисна категорија
на историската анализа?

Токму како што Халивел искажува амбиалентност
конзначењето на „феминизмот“ за „нашиот“ контекст,
историчарите одамна искажуваат амбиалентност
кон значењето на темпоралната потпора на нивните
историски феминизми; феминистите од науката
опширно дебатирале за историско-аналитичката пот-
Повеќето историчари веројатно ќе се согласат дека
премисата на идејата за феминизмот е признанието
deka жените – како група – се структурно во поне-
pоволната положба, а феминистичката пракса е „тре-
dиција на протест против произволната махка
превласт“.45 Меѓутоа, кавгациските расправи од кра-
јот на двестиот век за невозможното единство на
предметот на феминизмот покажуваат колку само
може да биде тешко да се омеѓи феминизмот. Како
што може да се спори околу (репрезентативните
тврдења на феминизмот (бидејќи категоријата жена
my concern here.43 In this article, I’m interested in the
formation of feminist historical knowledge and, more
broadly, broader constitutions of historical knowledge
about feminism. The notion of feminist generations, it
seems to me, has a degree of historicizing cultural and
academic purchase that require substantive troubling.
According to Suzanne de Castell, queer pedagogy calls
for a curriculum that is “implemented deliberately to
interfere with the production of...normal subjects.”44 In
one sense, that is precisely the task of this speculative
redeployment. A que(e)rying history of feminism would
interfere with the production of the “young woman” as a
subject generationally-removed from feminism.

(Modern) feminism: a useful category
of historical analysis?

Just as Halliwell expresses ambivalence about the
meaning of “feminism” for “our” context, historians
have long expressed ambivalence about the meaning and
temporal purchase of their historical feminisms; feminist
scholars have robustly debated the historico-analytic
purchase of the appellation “feminist” since the 1970s.
Most historians would probably agree that the idea of
feminism is premised upon a recognition that women –
as a group – are structurally disadvantaged and feminist
practice is a “tradition of protest against arbitrary male
dominion.”45 However, the fractious debates of the late-
twentieth century about the impossible unity of the
feminist subject demonstrate just how difficult delimiting
feminism can be. In the same way that the (re)presentative
claims of feminism are contestable (because the category
woman is fractured by difference) so too, historians have
robustly debated the temporal parameters of feminist
history (when does this practice of critique and protest
enраздробена поради разликите), така и историчарите опширно спореле около темпоралните параметри на феминистичката история (когазапочнува оваа пракса на критика и протест), и около мечите на историското включување (кои дејци од минатото можеме да ги (ре)презентираме како феминисти и со тоа да ги градиме во родословието на феминизмот).

еноля при променливото родословие на феминизмот за наставните потреби бара одредени параметри; ако за ништо друго, тогаш барем за да можат нашите студенти да си заминат со нешто што би им останало.46 Иако сеебидентификацијата на нашите историски субјекти може да се чини аналитички остварливо со тоа што секоја пракса или секое лице кои се сеебидентификуваат како „феминистички“ ќе припаднат во рамките на конкретниов историски наратив, во врска со таа стратегија постојат значителни проблеми: притоа, темпоралната специфичност на самото поим е најочигледна.47 Емпириското сеебedefиниране ќе го ограничи родословието на феминизмот на појавата на поимот при крајот на деветнаесеттиот век. Понатаму, ако погледот го фрлиме подалеку од шесеттите и седумдесеттите на дваесеттиот век, воопшто не изненадува амбињалентноста што мноштвото денешни жени ја чувствуваат кон тој поим; толку многу клучни „феминистички“ мислители од крајот на деветнаесеттиот и почетокот на дваесеттиот век изказале длабоки сомнежи во врска со политичката корисност на тој назив. Затоа, дефинирането на нашиот „историски“ феминизам е лизгав терен, зашто поединци и групи во минатото – кои денес имаат централно место во феминистичката мисла и пракса – не го ни користеле тој поим.48

енеа дискретен генеалогија на феминизмот за класното, обврзно, треба одредени параметри; ако за ништо друго, тогаш барем за да наши студенти си останат со нешто.
Leigh Boucher: “Queer(y)ing” historico-genealogies of feminism for the university classroom

In this way, forging a critically effective genealogy of feminism that hopes to (re)present actors from the past who had a substantive impact on the feminist project is necessarily an analytic imposition. As Denise Riley so provocatively argues, the key categories for feminist protest — namely, women and feminism — cannot be regarded as transhistorical constants, their meanings are far too contested (in myriad presents) and temporally malleable (in that, they change across time) to find any essential meaning of feminism. The analytic application of “feminism”, then, has to be historically specific (where “history” is an always incomplete and politicised engagement with the past constructed today rather than the past itself). In short, rather than looking for when and which individuals used the term (although, this particular strategy is part of feminism’s history), we need to choose who to include in the history and when to begin on the basis of our present political and analytic needs.

As Barbara Taylor writes, the “historical connections between the enlightenment and the rise of feminism have long been recognised.” There is little question that, at some point in Europe’s eighteenth century, a burst of social, political and intellectual practice emerged that contested the treatment of women. Whilst many feminist historians of the 1970s suggested that the liberal discourses of a reasoning and equal subject provided the rhetorical framework to contest patriarchy, problems with that historical narrative soon became all too apparent. It made “patriarchy” the ahistorical constant against which “women” (the other ahistorical constant) found a new language to fight against. Furthermore, the history of women’s lives across the contested periodisation

На тоj начин, ковањетo критички ефективно родословje на јеннизмот што се стреми да ги (ре)презентира актерите од минатото, кои имале значајно влијание врз јеннизтичкиот проект, не миновно е аналитичко наметнување. Како што Дениз Райли (Denise Riley) толку провокативно тврди, ключните категории за јеннизтички проект — имено, јените и јеннизмот — не може да се сметаат за трансисториски константи, за нивните значења премногу се спорело (во безброј облици) и време- мески се премногу растегливи (при што се менуваат низ времењата) за да може сe изнајде какво и да е суштинско значење за јеннизмот. Тогаш, аналитичката примена на „јеннизмот“ мора да биде историски конкретна (при што таа „историја“ е секогаш нецелсен и исполнен иерархија однос со минатото што се исконструирало денес, а не со самото минато). Накратко, наместо да се прашуваат кога и коj го употребил поимот (иако, таа стратегиjа е дел од историjата на јеннизмот), треба да избереме кого да го опфатиме во историjата и кога да започнеме врз основа на нашите сегашни политички и аналитички потреби.

Како што пишува Барбара Теjлор (Barbara Taylor), „одамна сe признати историските врски мeгу просветителството и подемот на јеннизмот“. Нема многу сомнеж дека, во даден миг од деветнаесеттиот век, во Европа избувнаа општественa, политичка и интелектуална пракса што се протиставила на третманот на жените. Иако мноштво јеннизтички историчари од седумдесетите години на дваесеттиот век велеa дека либералните дискурси за разумен и еднаков субjект ја дале реторичката рамка за оспорување на патриjarхатот, набро проблемите со тоj историски наратив станаа премногу видливи. Тоа од „патриjarхатот“ направи аисториска константа наспроти коjа „јените“
As the work of Thomas Laquer and Carole Pateman suggests, forms of knowledge that disrupted the pre-enlightenment social and political order enforced a *newly* rigid notion of sexual difference. In this way, Claire Goldberg Moses argues that the very “concept of ‘womanhood’ changed in the eighteenth century” and the emergence of feminism must be mapped against this shift. Whilst Dorinda Outram severely problematizes notions of the enlightenment and modernity as coherent historical signifiers, she nonetheless affirms that gender was and is one of the great contradictions in “the heart of enlightenment thinking.” The strands of enlightenment thinking that emphasize the idea of a “universal human nature, a …and a universal[ly] human form of rationality” – arguably the epistemological frameworks of modern liberal democracies – were both made coherent and destabilised by the carefully and rigidly enforced exclusion of women from their provenance. Riley puts this compellingly when she suggests that a new concept of “woman” emerged in the late-seventeenth century in which the “concept of the female person as thoroughly sexed” replaced the “sexless soul of earlier discourses.” The paradoxical outcome of this shift was a new regime of political differentiation and a new possibility of collective politics built upon the foundation of the fictive category, “woman.” (In this mode of analysis the tensions between equality and difference in universalising western discourses are a character
Discourse. The paradoxical outcome of this placement was a new regime on political differentiation and a new possibility for collective politics built on the fictitious category "gender".57 (In this sense, on analysis tendentiousness and the duality were universalized onto the competitive discourses of the modern regime.) Toga, with a new meaning, positivistism was used to create novi circles of ideas for gender differences and to create a rhetorical framework for contesting the political differentiations mapped onto these dualities. Modernity, then, might usefully be defined as both the origin and object of feminist protest as we understand it today.

To paraphrase Rosi Braidotti, we need to think about modernity and sexual differentiation “as two sides of the same coin.”58 Furthermore, this opens out the possibility for a genealogy of feminist practice that locates the animating problematic for feminist practice in the foundational discourses of the very locations deemed to have “moved on” from feminism; modernity didn’t offer a way to progress past patriarchy, rather, it introduced modalities of sexual difference that continue to foundationalise “our” gender order. Moreover, as Scott suggests, comprehending feminism as a central paradox of modernity effectively short circuits the equality/difference debates about whether discourses of ostensibly ungendered liberalism are the problem or the solution for feminist practice. As Scott so compellingly writes, “the need to both accept and refuse ‘sexual difference’... was the constitutive condition of feminism.”59 My reasons for doing so, however, are not so much directed towards disrupting the equality/difference debates within feminist discourse, rather, I am trying to think through a way to affirm the importance of feminist protest in contexts where logics of historico-generational

Da ja parafraziram Rosi Braidoti (Rosi Braidotti), treba da razmisluvame za modernitetot i polovata diferencijacija „kako za dve strani od isti put“58. Ponatamu, toa ja otvora mojnosta za rodoslovne na feministichkata praksa što ja lozi aanimiratka problematika za feministichkata praksa vo temeljnite discurse na samite lokacii za koj se smetalo deka „otishle ponatamu i se oddalchele“ od feminizmot; modernitetot ne pothudi neka da se napreduv i da se nadmine patriyharhatot, tuken vel nadaljniteli na polova razlika sto i natale go elementariziret „nashiot“ rodoporedok. Ponatamu, kako sto ukazuva Skot, razbiraneeto na feministizmot kono centralen paradoks na modernitetot praktikno gii zaobikelova debatite za ednakvosta/razlikite koji se odnesuvat na toa dali discurse na navi dum neorodeniot liberalizam se problemot ili reshenieto za feministichkata praksa. Kako sto Skot tolku interesno pisuvuva, „potrebata i da se prihati i da se odbie ‘polova razlika’... bila konstrukivniot uslov na feministizmot“59. Me góta, mojite prichini da gо starem toa ne se tolku of modernity.) In one sense, then, the enlightenment both implanted newly rigid notions of sexual difference and provided the rhetorical frameworks to contest the political differentiations mapped onto these dualities. Modernity, then, might usefully be defined as both the origin and object of feminist protest as we understand it today.
progression either dismiss feminist practice altogether, or, relegate certain kinds of feminist practice to the past. Indeed, in cultural contexts where the relevance of feminism is regularly dismissed, situating sexual difference and liberal democracy as the co-extensive products of the same epistemological shifts strikes me as a useful strategy. Feminism becomes, then, an attempt to challenge this order, whether conducted at an individual or collective level. In this definition, calling yourself a feminist (empirical self-definition) isn’t the only way to “be” a feminist, rather, pursuing strategies to destabilise connections between modern sexual difference and political, social, economic and cultural rights constitutes feminist practice.  

Strategic (mis)reading I

As I have previously suggested, the metaphor of generational change has emerged as a consistent preoccupation for both feminist and “mainstream” discussions of the feminist project. Whether in the discussions of the “third-wave” by feminists themselves, ambivalent engagements with feminism more broadly in the contested field that constitutes “postfeminism,” or outright rejections of the usefulness of feminist action for young women in “mainstream” representations, the concept of generational change anchors ostensibly contradictory judgements about the relationship between “young women” and feminism. Whilst generational
metaphors might seem to offer the possibility of short circuiting masculinist notions of progressive change (this is precisely the project of Julia Kristeva in *Women’s Time*), the notion of generational change doesn’t necessarily preclude a broader argument about linear development. Indeed, in these various contestations and reconfigurations of the feminist project, generational difference is mapped quite neatly onto a broader argument about linear historical change.

In their discussions of generational specificity, feminist writers all too readily mobilise progressive historical change as an explanation for specific modalities of feminist practice in the present; Lynn Chancer calls for a third-wave that would be “continuous with and yet different from its predecessors, reflecting its unique historical moment.” In a conversation about the feminist generations that follow her own, E. Ann Kaplan similarly argues that it is important to maintain the idea of generational specificity because it “connotes a kind of historical process.” So too, in her discussion of postfeminism as a “new” (and positive) development for younger women, Sarah Gamble foundationalises her characterisation of the postfeminist attitude via an historical typology of feminisms in which the first, second and third “epochs of feminism [have specific] central concerns.” In this modality of thought, “history” denotes an empirical difference between the past and present rather than an argument about the nature of that difference. In short, history exists as a verifiable fact rather than a story we tell to comprehend, situate and argue for change within our present. This is not to say I’m arguing for a radical ahistoricity in the rendering of past feminisms, rather, I am trying to suggest that – at
што може да се потврди, а не како приказна што ја раскажуваме за да ја сфатиме и ситуираме својата сегашност и притоа да се залагаме за промени. Тоа не значи дека се залагам за радикална аисторичност при изложувањето на минатите феминизми, туку се обидувам да укажам дека – во конкретниов миг – конфигурирањето на историјата на феминизмот како „процес“ во кој втората и третата „епоха на феминизмот“ ги одразуват своите „карактеристични историски мигови“ и „сепак и последен произлегувајки една од друга“ мобилизира една историско-генерацијска логика која се стреми да испрати некои видови феминизам во минатото или, што е можеби попотресно, наведува на претпоставка дека на нашив „карактеристичен историски миг“ воопшто не му е потребен феминизам.

Една од главните историски разлики утврдени меѓу вториот и третиот бран на феминизмот повеќе се однесува на статусот на поединецот. Феминистите од третиот бран, како што е Ребека Вокер (Rebecca Walker), тврдат дека:

начинот на кој сме го гледале или сфаќале феминизмот бил да се приспособуваме кон идентитет или начин на живеење што не дозвољува индивидуналност [и] сложеност.65

Така и Кети Бејл (Kathy Bail), која може да се опише како постфеминист, предлага младите жени да „ги отфрлат институционализираниот феминизам... и групната идентификација“ за сметка на „инди- видуалното дејствување“.66 Така и според Лезли Хејвуд (Leslie Heywood) и Џенифер Дрејк (Jennifer Drake) „идеологијата на индивидуалноста и натаму е главниот двигател во многу животи од третиот бран“.67 Вториот бран, според овој наратив, станува

One of the main historical differences constituted between the second and third-waves tends to be concerned with the status of the individual. Third-wave feminists such as Rebecca Walker argue that

the way that we have seen or understood feminism is to conform to an identity and way of living that doesn’t allow for individuality [and] complexity.65

So too, Kathy Bail - who might be characterised as a “postfeminist” – proposes that young women “reject institutionalised feminism… and group identification” in favour of “individual practice.”66 So too, for Leslie Heywood and Jennifer Drake “the ideology of individuality is still a major motivating force in many third-wave lives.”67 The second wave becomes, according to this narrative, a project hampered by its collectivity. If the “I” of the third-wave slogan – “I am the third-
проект чија пречка е неговата колективност. Доколку она „jas“ од слоганот на третиот бран – „jas сум третиот бран“ – е тврдење за индивидуална разлика во и меѓу категориите феминистка и жена, исто така е и аргумент против она „ние“ на вториот бран. Така, феминизмот од вториот бран што се замислува во овие претстави е политичко движење и една теорија оптоварена со сопствените опсесии со колективна акција и со обидите да спроведе политика на структурно, а не на индивидуално ниво. Слично на тоа, антифеминистичката „девојка“ според Ричард Цимман (Richard Jinman) во Сиднеј морнигер хералд, е „одговорна за сопствената самодефиниција“.

За мислителката од третиот бран Дебра Сиегел (Deborah Siegel), така, практиките на младите феминист(к)и се градат врз претпоставката дека „младите жени [се] тело што постојано се менува“ зашто ја сагледуваат индивидуалната разлика. Нагласката врз индивидуалното дејствување и фрагментирањето, и врз тврдењата дека феминистичката политика може да подразбира и индивидуално родова игра, моќ и уживање одсвоонува низ пројавите на младиот феминизам. Индивидуалното впуштање во сексуално уживање/моќ и поимите за убавина биле клучни белези на диференцијацијата за младите жени (за разлика од феминистките) и за младиото феминизам (за разлика од нивните решителни, но ветви мајки од вториот бран). Според Хејвуд (Heywood) и Дрејк (Drake), третиот бран ги признава одсветите на моќ што ги крепат поимите за убавина и копнеж, но ги користи моќите на уживањето, опасноста и дефинирањето што ги имаат тие структури. Навистина, контроверзната оценка на Камил Пања (Camille Paglia) за Мадона како „идината на феминизмот... за младите жени во светот“ се заснова врз нејзините тврдења дека „Мадона има далеку подлобока визија wave“ – is an assertion of individual difference within and between the categories of feminist and woman, it is also an argument against the “we” of the second wave. The “second wave” feminism being imagined in these representations is thus a political movement and body of theory constrained by its own obsessions with collective action and attempts to conduct politics at a structural rather than individual level. Similarly, the antifeminist “girl” according to Richard Jinman in the Sydney Morning Herald, is “responsible for her own self-definition.”

For third-wave thinker Deborah Siegel, young feminist practices are thus built on an assumption that “young women [are] an always shifting constituency” because they acknowledge individual difference. The emphases on individual action and fragmentation, and assertions that feminist politics might involve individual gender play, power and pleasure, reverberate throughout representations of young feminism. Individual engagements with sexual pleasure/power and notions of beauty have been crucial markers of differentiation for young women (in contrast to feminists) and young feminists (in contrast to their determined but dowdy second wave mothers). For Heywood and Drake, the third-wave acknowledges the relationships of power that underpin notions of beauty and desire but “makes use of the pleasure, danger, and defining power of those structures.” Indeed, Camille Paglia’s controversial assessment of Madonna as “the future of feminism... for young women around the world” is premised on her assertions that “Madonna has a far profounder vision of sex than do the feminists. She sees both the animality and the artifice [and] embodies the eternal values of beauty and pleasure.” For Naomi Wolf, this means that young
Identities

za seksot otkolku што имат ги феминистите. Таа ги не гледа и анималноста и вештината и отелотворува вечните вредности на убавината и уживането.”

За Наоми Вулф (Naomi Wolf), ова значи дека младите жени треба да си го побараат „сопствениот индивидуален глас, наместо да си го слетат гласот во некоеj колективен идентитет“ и да не се плашат „против огнот да се борат со оган“ кога ќе развиваат сексуално ориентиран „феминизам на моќта“.

The set of differences these representations constitute can, however, be usefully applied to a broader genealogy of the feminist project. Indeed, it is worth remembering that the alignment of womanhood with discourses of corporeal pleasure, enticement and power is a modality of thought that isn’t limited to the late twentieth century. Myriad histories confirm that the reorganisation (or, in fact, constitution) of a rigid notion of sexual difference in the eighteenth century was made possible by powerful connections between feminine character and female embodiment. Modernity’s “woman” has always been a firmly embodied subject (in contrast to the apparently disembodied male). The 1990s are not the first moment when women have grappled with the political possibilities that such differentiation enables.

Така, една историја за наставни потреби може да вклучува споредби меѓу „новата жена“ од крајот на деветнаесеттиот век и од почетокот на дванесеттиот век (контекстуализирана со кампањите за женската еманципација што ги зафатиле западните либерални демократии пред и во времето на нејzinата појава) и разни современи фигурации за феминистките или другите „млади жени“ (контекстуализирани со

A classroom history thus might include a comparison between the “new woman” of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (contextualised by campaigns for female enfranchisement that swept through western liberal democracies prior to and during her emergence) and various contemporary figurations of the feminist or otherwise “young women” (contextualised by the campaigns for civil and social rights prior to and
campaigns for gendered and social rights first and foremost. Indeed, many of the anxieties and excitement that surrounded the figure of the new woman – as either the symbol of the downfall of western society in a den of decadence or as the personification of a progressive political and social order that incorporated women – resonate all to well with representations of young women today. In both contexts, the field of popular culture provides a crucial domain to constitute her meaning. Similarly, then, whilst for some media commentators Madonna might personify a new world order of empowered and powerful women, for others, Britney Spears’ “antics” (which are made all the more scandalous because of her speculator and excessive embodiment) along with the rise of “out of control binge drinking by young women who embrace raunch culture” is a sorry indictment on the state of “our society.” The figurations “young women,” “sexual desire” and “power” have a long history of contested deployments and responses in cultural contexts where collective feminism has a visible presence. An examination of the history of the “new woman” as an empowered and sexualised subject then, might offer a useful strategy to destabilise the ways in which both third-wave/postfeminist practice and the empowered and sexual young woman of our cultural imaginary are currently rendered visible at the telos of feminism’s historical development.

Like the “sudden” rise of “raunch culture” in the US – whose primary figure, the out of control college girl burst into popular consciousness in the 1990s – the new woman, at least according to contemporary observers, burst into the public sphere in the 1880s during her emergence). Indeed, many of the anxieties and excitement that surrounded the figure of the new woman – as either the symbol of the downfall of western society in a den of decadence or as the personification of a progressive political and social order that incorporated women – resonate all to well with representations of young women today. In both contexts, the field of popular culture provides a crucial domain to constitute her meaning. Similarly, then, whilst for some media commentators Madonna might personify a new world order of empowered and powerful women, for others, Britney Spears’ “antics” (which are made all the more scandalous because of her speculator and excessive embodiment) along with the rise of “out of control binge drinking by young women who embrace raunch culture” is a sorry indictment on the state of “our society.” The figurations “young women,” “sexual desire” and “power” have a long history of contested deployments and responses in cultural contexts where collective feminism has a visible presence. An examination of the history of the “new woman” as an empowered and sexualised subject then, might offer a useful strategy to destabilise the ways in which both third-wave/postfeminist practice and the empowered and sexual young woman of our cultural imaginary are currently rendered visible at the telos of feminism’s historical development.
идентичности и 1890-ти. Из 1890-х годов.

Оттако се добило се претходно недостижен степен на образование, новата жена — во голема мерка буржоаски феномен — се поjavila во западноевропските и во американсите јавни сфери за да ги оспори некои од најинтегралните претпоставки на родовиот поредок. Отприлик во исто време, кампањата за женското право на глас, особено во Британија, почнала да придобива значителна колективна поддршка за политички реформи. И вистина, мощне слично на феминистичкото движење во 1970-ти, со овие колективни кампањи се постигнале конкретни реформи. Односот меѓу новата жена и реанимирањето и поголемата видливост на феминистичките кампањи за политичка еманципација бил сложен; според некои набљудувачи, новата жена го отелотворувала феминизмот; според други, таа била негов производ, додека некои тогашни феминистички мислители сметале дека модерните девојки кои возеле велосипеди, немале стеги и безгрижно танцувале биле проблем зашто ги поништувале исечкорите на феминистичкиот политички протест. И вистина, амбивалентноста што ликови како Ема Голдман (Emma Goldman) ја искажаа спрема колективните кампањи во хармонија со новите жени на крајот на нашиот век. Токму како што Мадона и Кристина Агилера го слават концептот на јелни и пожелни жени кои зборуваат енергично и се забавуваат, така и Голдман искажа заложба за „правото на жената да се самоискаже и правото на сите на убави и блескави работи“. Најпознатиот цitat на Голдман (кој можеби никогаш не го ни изрекла), „ако не можам да играм, не сакам да учествувам во вашата револуција“ многу силно одекнува меня денешните млади жени со самосвесна мобилизација на уживането и желноста како моќен белег на индивидуалноста.

and 1890s. Having attained a previously impossible level of education, the new woman — a largely bourgeois phenomena — emerged into the western European and American public spheres to challenge some of the most integral assumptions of the gender order. At around the same time, the campaign for female suffrage, particularly in Britain, began to garner significant collective support for political reform. Indeed, much like the feminist movement of the 1970s, concrete reform was achieved through these collective campaigns. The relationship between the new woman and the re-animation and increased visibility of feminist campaigns for political enfranchisement was a complex one; for some observers, the new woman embodied feminism, for others she was its product, whilst for some feminist thinkers at the time, these bicycle riding, free wheeling and dancing modern-girls were a problem because they undid the advances of feminist political protest. Indeed, the ambivalence figures such as Emma Goldman expressed about collective campaigns resonate so compellingly with the new women of our own fin-de-siecle. Just as Madonna and Christina Aguilera celebrate the concept of desiring and desirable women speaking stongly and having fun, so too, Goldman voiced a commitment to womens’ “right to self expression [and] everybody’s right to beautiful, radiant things.” Goldman’s most famous quotation (which, perhaps, she never said), “if I can’t dance, I don’t want to be part of your revolution,” resonates all too well with the self-conscious mobilisation of enjoyment and desire as a powerful mark of individuality for younger women today.
As Carol Smith-Rosenberg points out, there were two “generations” of new women in Britain and America, the first, towards the end of the 19th century, and the second in the 1920s. This second generation bears a startling resemblance to some of the characteristics understood as specific to the third-wave. As Rosenberg argues, “the new women... of the 1920s spoke to each other and to the older feminists about sex and power, pleasures and independence.”

Whether through choices in fashion, bodily comportment, or written narratives of female sexual desire, the new woman “challenged existing gender relations and the distribution of power.” According to Esther Newton, for the “new women [of the 1920s] sexuality - for itself and as a symbol of female autonomy – became a preoccupation.” As a lived category and a figuration of popular culture, the “new woman” embodied an explicit engagement with the politics and power of beauty and sex. As Dowling writes, “the New Woman... expressed her quarrel with Victorian culture chiefly through sexual means – by heightening sexual consciousness, candor and expressiveness.”

The third-wave’s historical specificity is often justified by declarations of its’ willingness to strategically redeploy and reinscribe gender norms as a mode of political action. This specificity is then contrasted to the institutional feminism of the second wave past. However, the willingness of young women of the 1920s to engage with similar strategies undermines the coherence of this narrative of historical innovation and departure. The emphasis on third-wave and postfeminist individuality and its contrast to the second-wave would then become part of a longer genealogy of contestation over feminist political action. Just as the suffragists were making structural arguments about the need for women’s enfranchisement and the new woman was reinscribing...
le структурни аргументи за потребата од еманципација на жените, и новата жена ги преиспишува поимите за женскоста, убавината и желноста, како и колективната акција на женственост (ката) од вториот бран дејствува како конститутивен контрапункт на индивидуалистичките стратегиски политики на женственост (ката) од третиот бран. Во еден поширок културен контекст, жената која се здобила со моќ и се реализирала (и нејзината проблематична сестра, жената која добила толку моќ и толку се реализирала што излегла од контрола) е лик кој има смисла поради истовременото (претходното) анимирање на дискурсите за политичките права и протестот од страна на женственските борци на истиот начин на кој навидум опасните впуштања на новата жена во секс и уживање фигуративно се поврзуваат во сложената реакција на, против и со колективните кампањи за политички реформи.

As a closing point, the 1920s witnessed a group of American literary commentators committed to the idea of women's equal political rights critique the idea of feminism as a project that would efface their human “individuality.” These literary radicals in Greenwich Village described themselves as “pro-woman without being anti-man,” and identified their position as “postfeminist.”83 The 1990s are not the first moment when women have disagreed about the best means of dealing with political, social, and economic exclusions and nor are they the first moment when women have discovered that pleasure and desire can be powerfully invoked and deployed to make claims on individuality and empowerment. In this reading, their status as historical solution – hopefully – is made less secure.
A crucial component of the historic-generational logic that underpins both the wider cultural historiography of feminism’s place in contemporary contexts and young feminists’ rendering of their own specificity centres around an historicised characterisation of political strategy. In short, for many observers, young feminists and young women alike are united (even in their disunity) by a specifically postmodern approach to identity. Thus, Ann Brooks, in her discussion of “postfeminisms,” characterises the second wave as a movement that “appeal[ed] to the [unified] liberal humanism of enlightened modernity.”

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Brooks makes an extremely historical argument, asserting that the young feminism has been produced by “the move from modernity to postmodernity.” So too, young women are regularly represented in the mainstream press as postmodern agents. In this way, Joanna Briscoe’s discussion of the “new generation of women... who are beneficiaries of feminism” muses that “culturally, domestically and aesthetically, we seem to be dipping into our mothers’ era [with]... a knowing, postmodern nod.”

So too, Clinton Walker makes a similar observation about “hip young urban women... [who] in true postmodern fashion... have appropriated what was supposed to be the ultimate ‘chick magnet,’ the Valiant Charger.” Mariella Frostrup’s discussion of young women scathingly makes similar connections, lamenting the “postmodern joke that deems a woman baring her breasts on a magazine cover as an example

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Young women are thus represented as practitioners of postmodernism (whether to bemoan their false consciousness or applaud their empowerment and humour). This is after all, a generation who grew up watching the “postmodern approach to identity” that is Madonna.

According to this historical rendering, the generational specificity of the third-wave, postfeminism and their postmodern ambivalent sisters are produced by a particular historical trajectory. A changed cultural context has de-essentialised identity. (So too, this narrative about postmodern selves and subjects, in no small way, justifies the third-wave and postfeminist engagement with discourses of beauty, pleasure and power.) At its bluntest, this narrative asserts that young women and young feminists are the first generation to realise that there is no essential category “woman” and base their engagement with power on a self-conscious project of denaturalised and subversive appropriation. Thus, the collective second wave was constrained by a thoroughly modern political framework and the postfeminist is comfortable with a cultural condition that has de-essentialized identity and problematized notions of collective action. For third-wave writer Devoney Looser, this means “one of the characteristics we’re known for is our disunity. Maybe we’re not as unified as the generation that preceded us. Maybe we’re just not as categorizable.”

The narrative is a compelling
Можеби не сме толку единствени колку што била генерацијата пред нас. Можеби само не сме толку подложен на категоризација.“. 90 Наративов е привлечење; постмодерниот феминизам (во своите различни облици) и постмодерните млади жени се појавиле не само благодарение на впуштањето во расправи со конкретни теоретичари и мислители, туку и благодарение на промената што настапила во историскот контекст. (Слично на тоа, цело мноштво академски истражувања ја поткрепуваа историзацијата на практиките на современите млади феминисти како исключителни за нашето време така што постојано го става оној проблематичен лик – Мадона – на почетокот на историзираниот дискусија за постмодерната политика за идентитетот. 91)

Како што покажаа многубројните дебати за постколонијализмот, постмодернизмот и постфеминизмот, постои речиси невозвладлива историска конотација во зборот „пост“. 92 Во една расправа за постмодерната теорија во пошироко смисла, М.Џ. Дилејни (М.Ј. Деланеј) тврди дека

постмодерната мисла често се потпира на еден мошн конвенционален поглед кон напредокот кога тврди дека ги отфрлала грешките на монолиthic entity што различно се опишувал како модернитет/просветителско обмислување/на западната метафизичка традиција. 93

Постфеминистите и феминистите од третиот бран на сличен начин се врзани за претстави за историска прогресија. Така, претходните феминизми стануваат проблематично модерни впуштања во родовиот поредок, а вродената непредвидливост на третиот бран нуди „преном“. Значајно е што овој наратив ја сместува постмодерната културна состојба – и нејзината „свест“ за идентитетот – во последните десет години од двесеттиот век. Тука не се бараат

one; postmodern feminism (in its various forms) and postmodern young women, have been produced, not only by an engagement with specific theorists or thinkers, but by a shift in historical context. (Similarly, a wealth of scholarly research supports this historicization of contemporary young feminist practices as exceptional to our own time by repeatedly placing that troublesome figure – Madonna – at the opening of historicised discussions of postmodern identity politics. 91)

As the various debates about postcolonialism, postmodernism, and postfeminism have revealed, there is an almost insurmountable historical connotation in the word “post.” 92 In a discussion of postmodern theory more broadly, M.J. Delaney argues that

postmodern thought often relies on a very conventional view of progress in claiming to refute the errors of a monolithic entity variously described as modernity/ enlightenment thinking/the western metaphysical tradition. 93

Post- and third-wave feminisms are similarly bound by notions of historical progression. Previous feminisms thus become problematically modern engagements with the gender order and the inherent contingency of the third-wave offers a “way through.” Significantly this narrative places the postmodern cultural condition – and its associated “knowingness” about identity – in the last ten years of the twentieth century. The debates around the historical “origins” of postmodernism don’t
Indeed, feminism’s history is littered with examples of precisely this kind of strategic redeployment. The early 20th century campaign for female suffrage in the UK lead by the Pankhurst’s provides just such an example. In a campaign that smacks of apparently postmodern strategies – in that they mobilised mass media and engaged in a complex reinscription of femininity – the politics of the suffrage campaign was riven with ambivalence.

Furthermore, the Suffragettes derived their attribution from a transcription of the very terms of their political exclusion and dismissal. In a *Daily Mail* piece obviously designed to belittle their campaign, the Pankhurst’s suffrage militancy was derided by the application of the diminutive “ette.” Could the Pankhurst’s appropriation
of this term not be understood as precisely the kind of strategy the third-wave claims as historically specific? In a strategy that resonates with the apparent postmodern political practice of a parodic reinsciption of the terms of exclusion, the suffragettes redeployed the language of their disempowerment.⁹⁶

Research into the apparently collective bound second-wave has, in fact already begun to constitute histories of women who adopted, reinscribed, and self-consciously fragmented notions of womanhood and femininity. In her discussion of feminist music in late 1970s Australia, Kathy Sport suggests that arguably, women musicians are always self-conscious of their positioning as “beyond analysis,” inauthentic, disruptive and different, even when they are playing music “straight up.” Such knowing produces sarcasm, irony and parody, and a play with self-interpretation and self-deprecating humour, which is also reflected in the band names.

Sport describes how the rock band “Clitoris” chose their name as “a daring and a humorous public gesture. The word “clitoris” was a linguistic intervention stated their angry feminist opposition to ‘cock rock’ and at the same time parodied it.”⁹⁷ So too, Mary Tomsic’s research into feminist filmmaking in the 1970s reveals a political framework less attached to essentialised notions of womanhood than assertions of the specifically 1990s postmodern sensibility would suggest. Whilst a conventional reading of 1970s feminist practices of consciousness raising might suggest these films were a
means to “discover” commonality – they were geared to small “women-centred learning environments” – the strategies of these film-makers were much more complex than this. In her 1975 discussion of their project, Lorna Scarles argued film was “the prime myth-making machine of our times.” Scarles asserted that “we WILL invent ourselves.” The representation of femininity was deemed an act of invention rather than discovery. Indeed, Tomsic compellingly describes the ironically titled *We Aim to Please*. The film opens with the question “is the camera rolling?” and then we see [the film-makers] Nash and Laurie standing naked in front of the camera, initially laughing… [Later,] Nash and Laurie put on make up in an exaggerated manner, rendering them ugly and monstrous rather than pretty and feminine. Sequences such as this are at times playful, but also have serious consequences.98

These are women knowingly deploying humour, irony and parody to unsettle and challenge the gender order. In this way, a history of feminist performers might, for example, unsettle the specificity of Madonna’s postfeminist, ironic and knowing politics. Indeed, Robertson’s history of “feminist camp” constitutes a history of screen-based performers who “knowingly” looked beyond the screen to parody the very femininity they apparently embodied; this history begins, at least for Robertson, in the 1930s.99

Toa се жени што свесно користат хумор, иронија и пародија за да го разнишаат и оспорат родовиот поредок. На тој начин, историјата на изведуваците феминист(к)и може, на пример, да я поремети специфичноста на постфеминистичката, иронична и свесна политика на Мадона. Така, Робертсоновата (Robertson) историја на „феминистичкиот табор“ претставува историја на изведувачи кои го користеле екранот или платното и кои „свесно“ оделе подалеку од екранот или платното за да прават пародии со иронично насловениот филм *Се сијремиме да задоволиме*. Филмот почнува со прашањето „работи ли камерата?” а потоа ги гледаме [филмациите] Неш и Лори како стојат голи пред камерата и на почетокот се смеат... the ironically titled *We Aim to Please*. The film opens with the question ‘is the camera rolling?’ and then we see [the film-makers] Nash and Laurie standing naked in front of the camera, initially laughing... [Подоцна] Неш и Лори претерано се шминкаат, што ги прави грди и чудовиши, наместо убави и женствени. Секвенците како оваа понекогаш се разиграни, но имаат и сериозни последици.98

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In a similar way, Shulamith Firestone’s *Dialectic of Sex*, published in 1970 as part of the so-called second wave could be figured as a strategic redeployment of the tools of modernity back upon itself. Firestone’s text forcefully argued for the biological basis for women’s oppression; the “patriarchy,” in this reading, was a product of the biological necessity of child-birth. Firestone, quite famously compared the process of child-birth to “shitting a pumpkin;” the removal of this necessity – via reproductive technologies – would open out the possibility for the revolution. These technologies, in a Marxist reading of the means of reproduction, needed to be seized for the oppressed class – namely women.

Not surprisingly, Firestone’s *Dialectic* has often been considered to be a product of problematic modernity. With a thoroughly essentialised notion of womanhood, an attempt to invoke biology as an explanation for female oppression, and the deployment of collective Marxism as the weapon to unmake these connections, this text would seem to embody precisely the “problems” of the second wave. However, if post and third-wave politics are characterised by their willingness to strategically redeploy, reinscribe and invert notions of identity as a form of political action – and thus destabilise the gender order that produces them – Firestone’s text could easily be considered to perform precisely this function. If Firestone’s characterisation of pregnancy and childbirth as a “barbaric” process needing to be excised from women’s experience isn’t a strategic inversion of gender norms, I don’t know what is. Indeed, the mobilisation of scientific
technology and knowledge as both explanation for and escape from patriarchal oppression exhibits precisely the ambivalent engagement with forms of knowledge and power usually associated with postmodern politics.

Indeed, the postmodern is always, necessarily, an engagement with the spectre of the modern. As Andreas Huyssen argues, “[we need to] keep in mind postmodernism’s relational nature.” The constitutive “outside” which a discrete periodisation of postmodernity (and the third-wave) imagines, ignores the ways in which postmodern thinking and practice deploys specific tools of modernity back upon itself in order to open out different possibilities. According to Michel Foucault, for example, modernity cannot be escaped or progressed past. Rather, a mode of self-critique can partially expose the boundaries of possibility that make the rational subject of modernity possible in order to make them differently. The postmodern becomes, then, an attitude to and destabilization of modernity rather than its temporally distinct inheritor. If the “post” of postmodernity is understood as a contestation of the coherencies of modernity (as an attitude to modernity and its unified subject), couldn’t feminism be positioned as constitutive of this critique (as an attitude to modern sexual difference)? As Susan Bordo observes, long before the advent of properly named postmodern theory, feminist protest brought “the category of the ‘human’... down to earth, [gave it] a pair of pants, and reminded [him] that [he] was not the only player in town.”

На пример, Волстонкрафт (Wollstonecraft) ја засновала својата жестока критика на Русо (Rousseau) и Пејн (Paine) во 1792 година врз претпоставка дека положбата на жените како „раб или деспот“ е производ на „историјата“, а не на некаков природен или вселенски поредок. Според Волстонкрафт, постоечкиот искушување на жените од правата на човекот не можело да се оправда рационално (просветителскиот родов поредок, барем за Пејн и за Русо, почивал врз природни основи); напротив, можело да се објасни преку онаа друга елементарна справа за калапење на либералната мисла, историјскиот контекст.105 Според Волстонкрафт, ако продолжи таа состојба, би се „попречил напедокот на разумот“.106 Аргументите на Волстонкрафт за историјата се обиделе да ја поткришат натурализираната логика на просветителската мисла. Токму како што Фаерстоун го мобилизирала марксизмот за да ја преиспише женскоста, така и Волстонкрафт го применила историското знаење како начин на критика. Историските околности (поскоро отколку природата) предизвикувале обеснашување на жените, а идниот напредок на човештвото зависел од историскиот развој што ќе се промени од ваквата состојба. Така, размишувањето дека феминизмот секогаш веќе е амби валентен во врска со модернитетот нуди начин за расчленување на постмодерното знаење од 1990-тите. Па зашто тогаш Мадона, феминистките од третиот бран и младите жени кои возат бесни коли ги сметаме за стратегски, но Волстонкрафт ја сметаме за наивката на модернитетот?

So too, Joan Scott in her discussion of early French feminism, argues that feminism necessarily contests and reconfigures the claims of democratic entitlement. For example, Wollstonecraft’s trenchant critique of Rousseau and Paine in 1792 was founded on an assumption that women’s position as a “slave or a despot” was the product of “history” rather than a natural or universal order. For Wollstonecraft, the extant exclusion of women from the rights of man wasn’t justifiable upon rational grounds (the enlightenment gender order, at least for Paine and Rousseau, was based upon a natural foundation), rather it was explicable via that other foundational framing device of liberal thought, historical context.105 For Wollstonecraft, the continuation of this situation would “retard the progress of reason.”106 Wollstonecraft’s arguments about history attempted to fracture the naturalised logic of enlightenment thought. Just as Firestone mobilised Marxism to re-inscribe womanhood, so too, Wollstonecraft deployed historical knowledge as a mode of critique. Historical circumstance (rather than nature) had produced the disempowerment of women and the future progress of humanity depended upon an historical development away from this condition. Thinking about feminism as always and already ambivalent about modernity, then, offers a way to disarticulate postmodern knowingness from the 1990s. Indeed, why do we understand Madonna, third-wave feminists and muscle car driving young women as strategic but Wollstonecraft as modernity’s dupe?
Identities

Scott,

Feminism’s historical specificity comes from the fact that it worked within and against whatever are the prevailing assumptions of its time. Its critical force comes from the fact that it exposes the contradictions in systems that claim to be coherent.107

For example, discourses of liberal democracy that rely on the idea of the reasoning individual at their centre promise equal political entitlements and thus produce the possibility of collective political action to make a claim upon them. Feminism, however, demonstrates that these entitlements are always and already premised on a gendered hierarchy. For Jane Flax, feminism and postmodernism thus share a particular attitude to modernity in that they contest and destabilise the myths of coherence that enable assertions of unified truth, stable identities, and universal reason. As Flax argues, “it is not unreasonable for persons who have been defined as incapable of self-emancipation to insist that concepts such as the autonomy of reason, objective truth and beneficial progress through scientific discovery ought to include... women as well as men.”108 In the process of these claims, however, feminist protest, action and thought undermine the stability and coherence of these notions. The claims upon them could thus be considered a strategy to fracture their power. In this reading, feminism has always “jammed the theoretical machinery” of modernity.109 If postmodernism is an attitude of critique towards modernity, doesn’t that also characterise the history of feminism?
The self-proclaimed specificity of postfeminist and third-wave political action would then be placed in a longer genealogy of ambivalent feminist engagement with modernity. (And, equally significantly, feminist political action and thought would be refigured as one of the motors of critique that has always undermined its claims.) I don’t make these points, however, to attack third-wave and postfeminist practice, or, make claims about historical inaccuracy. Rather, I’m interested in the ways in which the assertion of third-wave specificity is currently being historicised as a departure or innovation. Perhaps we might constitute a genealogy of ambivalence and reinscription that reaches outside our own temporal frame, and, escapes a simple either/or binary for modernity and postmodernity (and, by implication, equality and difference). This would situate postfeminist and third-wave political action outside a narrative of inevitable historical progression and development. The historical innovation and specificity of the third-wave would then be reconfigured as a product of a longer genealogy of feminist approaches to politics rather than a being legitimated by an historical hierarchy to the second wave.

Conclusions?

Whilst historians may continue to animate fears about disciplinary demise and the perceived (ir)relevance of historical knowledge in public debate and postmodern theorists affirm that the historical meta-narrative has lost cultural credibility, there is little question that historical knowledge still has power. Indeed, in many ways, the
assertion that feminism is “over” is underwritten by perhaps the most potent metanarrative structure of the enlightenment, namely, the notion of historical progress. The “place” of the historian in this context, then, seems just as important as ever; regardless of our own engagements with the postmodern critique of knowledge production, we live in a context were a cultural historiography of feminism’s past and its consequent relevance today has a “naturalized” potency that even the most modernist historian could only envy. I would hope, then, that historians, should and would be ethically obliged to consider the political work their historical narratives perform in the present, not only because postmodern thinking suggests we should, but because historical knowledge still matters. However, whilst many historians have begun to seriously contemplate what it means to write (postmodern) history, few (if any) of these grapple with, perhaps, one of the key sites where histories are made; the university classroom. Whilst the entreaties of Ermarth, Munslow, Morgan and Jenkins encourage historians to unmoor themselves from their necessarily fictive connections to the past and instead anchor their practice to an ethical and political obligation to the present, very few postmodern practitioners write about how these projects might be framed in the classroom. This article has been an attempt to move that pedagogic conversation from the segregated spaces of the staff lunch-room and pedagogic journal into the “cut and thrust” of professional knowledge production, where, I suggest, it belongs.
This discussion, in one sense, is a continuation of a conversation I have been having over the last few years with colleagues about “what to do with the history of feminism in our lecture theatres and classrooms”? The answers I have offered, then, are an attempt to engage with the past on the assumption that, as historians, we are all engaged in a conversation, both with each other and with our students. It is in that spirit that these (mis)readings of feminism’s history have been offered. Thinking practically, as any pedagogically minded historians reading this paper would, these two (mis)readings essentially offer a way to frame our classroom conversations. The institutional structures of universities mean that most undergraduate teaching still occurs in the format of lectures followed by seminar conversations. Whilst the ongoing pedagogic conversation about seminar format and the hopeful predictions of the ways in which various student centered approaches can disrupt the power-dynamics of knowledge production are important, we also need to acknowledge that – as lecturers pontificating from the podium on a weekly basis – we have a power which doesn’t look like it will disappear any time soon. Thinking about the way we frame these weekly lectures, then, is a crucial task. They – like these (mis)readings – are conversational beginnings rather than conclusions, but, narrative structure nonetheless makes a difference.

Thinking about how these framing mechanisms interact with the formations of identities and politics in our present, then, strikes me as an important task. The
The notion of generational difference still occupies a central place in the feminist and non-feminist imaginary alike, and, I have tried to suggest, the historico-generational logic that supports this rendering of feminist pasts and presents desperately needs to be incohered. In short, historians need to stop talking about generational change and specificity and start talking about how the animation of these ideas prioritizes certain imaginings of the feminist present and future, or, how it enables a vision of the present without feminism at all.
колективност или индивидуалност, и за нивно легитимирање. Понатаму, овие разлики се токму разграничишувањата што се впишале во начинот на кој младите антифеминистки ја претставуваат нашава денешница користејки една пошироко културна историографија на feminismот. Тогаш, размислувањето за начинот на кој „целата“ историја на feminismот може да ги зафати овие стратегии и ставови може да понуди начин за поништување на тие темпорализирачки логики на легитимирање и отфрлање. Навистина, може ли, благодарение на едно вакво (квир) испитување на историјата на feminismот, и темпорализирачките искушувања што ги прават кохерентни третобрановските и постфеминистичките идентитети и наративите за историскиот напредок кои обезбедуваат „мејнострим“ антифеминистички идентитети да не изгледаат толку како единствена опција за сегашноста и за иднината на feminismот?

Белешки:

3. Ibid.
5. Како што забележува Анџела Мекроби, во 1990-тите се појави една нова културна логика која изгледаше како да го „зема предвид [феминизмот]“ за да „нагласи дека веке не е потребен“. Angela McRobbie, “Post-

Notes:

3. Ibid.
5. As Angela McRobbie notes, an emergent mode cultural logic emerged in the 1990s that seemed to “take [feminism] into account” in order to “emphasize that it is no longer needed.” Angela McRobbie, “Post-Feminism and Popular


7. Реакционерниот дискурс на изразот „предалеку“ ре
dовно се мобилизира во дневните весници за да се критикуваат губењата на женственоста или наводно
tо обезвреднување на мајчинството. Меѓу поскореш


9. Денес постои огромна литература што ги испитува сложените начини на кои сложената културна про


10. In much popular representation, the actions of feminists in the past are held up as useful and important moments of change but not relevant to contemporary contexts.


14. I don’t, however, introduce this article with Halliwell in order to rehearse the debate about whether she is/not a feminist and whether her representations of feminism are/not accurate. The figure of Halliwell already provides too many feminist and non-feminist commentators alike with narrative fodder to violently demarcate their visions of feminist practice. By this I mean, a discussion of Halliwell provides a useful way to “respond” to feminism today. In the same way that “anti” feminists use Halliwell as proof positive of the irrelevance of feminism to today’s politico-cultural context so too, many a self-identified feminist employs Halliwell’s rhetoric to demonstrate how the feminist project has been undermined by the commodification (and thus political undermining) of properly named “feminism.” Both of these positions strike me as less than useful because they provide a mechanism through which various interlocutors can affirm their own political relevance whilst dismissing their imagined counterparts. A sample of these kinds of writings (from various positions) includes, Jennifer Baumgardner and Amy Richards, *Manifesta: Young Women, Feminism, and the Future*, 1st ed. ed. (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2000), Germaine Greer, *The Whole Woman*.

16. Kathleen Karlyn succinctly summarizes these findings when she suggests that, for many young women, “feminism seems most evident as a ‘structuring absence;’ it exists as an irrelevancy to their everyday lives.” Kathleen Karlyn, “Scream, Popular Culture and Feminism’s Third-wave: ‘I’m Not My Mother,’” Genders OnLine Journal, no. 38 (2003).


20. I choose the term “cultural historiography” rather than, say, “public memory” because I am suggesting that, in this case, the object of remembering is being historicised rather than “remembered” (in the various forms remembering can take). Indeed, the narratives about feminism’s irrelevance have a degree of cultural authority formal historiography aims to have.

21. By mainstream I mean non specialist (whether that be feminist or academic).

22. These terms are, of course, contested. Third-wave feminism/ist and postfeminism/ist are both self-mobilised, however, as identifications within feminist discourse to locate the theoretical and political practice of “young” feminists. This rhetorical field is made even more complex by the critical assessments of postfeminist culture (largely reliant on readings of ostensibly “strong women” in American cultural production) by third-wave feminists. So, in a sense, postfeminism is both a political identification deployed by some feminists to define their practice, and, a critical term deployed within some fields of feminist discourse to describe the “problems” with the post-1990s feminist world.


Looser (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997).


28. One of the best accounts of how Foucault’s notion of a “history of the present” can simultaneously negotiate the obligations to empirical scholarship and justify attention to the politics of the present remains, to my mind, Mitchell Dean, Critical and Effective Histories (London: Routledge, 1994). I limit the relevance of this project to that hoary historical signifier – “western liberal democracies” – because I don’t mean to imply that the cultural logics I am outlining are in any way a “globalised” phenomena; this necessarily limits the application of these misreadings.


35. As Victoria Hattam suggests, conventions of historical research “need to be reframed as a self-conscious response to issues in our own time” because postmodern critique has made the claim to study the past “for its own sake” impossible to uphold and alerted us to the necessarily political nature of all knowledge formations. Victoria Hattam, “History, Agency, and Political Change,” *Polity* 32, no. 3 (2000).


38. My thanks must go to Sarah Pinto for years (!) of conversations of this nature – whether about our historical
немаше да го напишам без нејзинот силно ангажиран политичко-теориски ум. За нејзината расправа за политичките импликации на историските наративи, види “Emotional Histories” Re-thinking History [во подготовка].


43. I realize, of course, that this is necessarily an incomplete project precisely because I don’t engage with the dynamics of knowledge production “in the classroom.” Thinking, however, about the stories we enact (even if only so our students can contest them) is an important project. However, I’m also wary of the efforts to produce young feminist subjects through the act of teaching history. There is a drastic difference, I would suggest, between the act of disrupting knowledge formation and imposing the “right” subject position in its place.


45. This definition is drawn from Nancy Cott. Nancy Cott, The Grounding of Modern Feminism (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987).
46. Whilst the postmodernist in me simply wants to “deconstruct” the meaning of feminism (both historical and otherwise) in the classroom, I’m less convinced that this is a strategy that always supplies useful political (and indeed, educational) outcomes. Being comfortable with instability requires training!

47. As is well documented, feminism appeared in its French form in the 1890s and was translated into English quite soon after.

48. Barbara Caine’s warning about employing some analytic and historical specificity to our use of the term is, however, a useful reminder. As Caine argues, in the context the fractious debates about feminisms plurality in the 1990s, “there is some merit in limiting the term and its claims.” Barbara Caine, “Feminism, Suffrage and the Nineteenth Century English Women’s Movement,” Women’s Studies International Forum 5, no. 6 (1982).


51. Even Gerda Lerner’s much longer study locates a significant shift in the late eighteenth century. Lerner is, however, seeking to analyse “feminist consciousness... [which she defines as] the awareness of women that they belong to a subordinate group; that they have suffered wrongs as a group; that their condition of subordination is not natural; that they must join with other women to remedy these wrongs.” For Lerner, this means that a feminist consciousness of patriarchy was possible long before “modernity.” In one sense, I don’t disagree. There are certainly examples that can demonstrate women challenged their socially produced position as early as the twelfth century. Gerda Lerner, The Creation of Feminist
In the schema I am proposing, however, I’m less convinced that we should call that “feminism,” for political reasons that will become apparent. Indeed, a useful corollary to the project of constraining “feminism” to the modern period would also be to bring the term ‘patriarchy’ back into historical discourse to denote a stubborn relationship of power that seems to cut across most distinctions of historical time. Responses to patriarchy, then, wouldn’t all be feminist. On the use of patriarchy as a term of historical analysis, see Judith M. Bennett, “Feminism and History,” *Gender and History* 1, no. 3 (1989).

52. See, for example, Katherine B. Clinton, “Femme Et Philosophe: Enlightenment Origins of Feminism” *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, no. 8.

53. For a discussion of this, see Susan Amussen, “The History of Feminism,” *Journal of Women’s History* 8, no. 1 (1996). The determined hostility of many enlightenment thinkers towards political equality between the socio-political categories “man” and “woman” similarly undermines the assumption that the epistemological assumptions of western modernity offered women new ways to comprehend existing structures of exclusion. This is not to say that I want to position “western enlightenment” as the only problem against which women have had to mobilize, and, indeed, as the problem and not its solution. Rather, I am trying to suggest a more nuanced approach to this particular problem. Indeed, Frederick Cooper’s discussion of liberal democratic discourses in colonial contexts is instructive here, Cooper suggest that we need to pay attention to the ways in which these frameworks contained “internal urges of exclusion” (to paraphrase Uday Mehta) but also to the ways in which ideas about liberal rights and entitlements offered “niches in which [people would] hide and fend for themselves [and] handles by which


57. Denise Riley, Am I That Name: Feminism and the Category of “Women” In History (University of Minnesota Press, 1989).


60. Perhaps the most obvious problem with this particular delimitation is the ways in which feminism becomes the product of western historical shift and I certainly don’t mean to imply that feminism is necessarily, inevitably and always a western project. Rather, I would hope that thinking about “modern” sexual difference as the instituting logic for feminist protest demands a
conceptualisation of modernity that doesn't start and finish in Europe. Antoinette Burton’s suggestion that we think about gender difference and imperialism as mutually constitutive (rather than discrete fields that operate through each other) is instructive here. Indeed, the histories of the enlightenment and sexual difference are implicated in that other great project of modernity, imperialism. The gendered discourses that enabled the concept of the reasoning individual were, as Trinh T. Minh-ha points out, equally determined by the concepts of racial difference that produced the possibility of imperial exploitation. European modernity was thus produced, to paraphrase Dipesh Chakrabarty, by its provincial engagements. So too, then, (modern) feminism – as so much recent work has argued – was constituted in imperial exchanges and exploitations. Trinh T. Minh-ha, *Woman, Native, Other* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999). Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*, ed. Sherry B Ortner, Princeton Studies in Culture / Power / History (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).

Significantly, whilst contemporary newspaper columnists might regularly dismiss the relevance of feminism to “our world,” they simultaneously assert the important work occurring in that equally hoary signifier, the “third world.” We must be careful, therefore, not to frame feminism as an outcome of “Europe” but of a modernity that imbricates centres and peripheries as historical “origins.” Antoinette Burton, *Burdens of History: British Feminists, Indian Women, and Imperial Culture, 1865-1915* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994); Antoinette Burton, “Thinking Beyond the Boundaries: Empire, Feminism and the Domains of History,” *Social History* 26, no. 1 (2001); Antoinette Burton, ed., *Politics and Empire in Victorian Britain: A Reader* (New York: Palgrave, 2001); Kumari Jayawarderna, *Feminism and Nationalism in the Thirds Worlds* (London: Zed Books, 1986).


74. Liz Conor makes a similar argument about the ways in which this embodiment was represented in new forms of visual culture in the early twentieth century. Liz Conor, *The Spectacular Modern Woman: Feminine Visibility in the 1920s* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004).


80. Ibid.


86. Ibid.


91. By this I mean, Madonna functions as a historicised emblem of new practices of parody and appropriation in much feminist scholarship regardless of whether these are seen as a problem or solution. How many times have we all read articles about women in the contemporary music industry that begin with a discussion of Madonna? See, for example, Gayle Wald, “Just a Girl? Rock Music, Feminism, and the Cultural Construction of Female Youth” *Signs* 32, no. 3 (1998).


94. For Elizabeth Deeds-Ermart, for example, if modernity is defined by its relatively “coherent and unified set of beliefs about the self, reality and time... [and] above all... in the sovereignty of the idea of history,” then the attitude of postmodernity was present from at least the beginning of the twentieth century. Elizabeth Deeds-Ermart, *Sequel to History: Postmodernism and the Crisis of Representational Time* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992).


